

# SLEEP & YOUR HEALTH

Sleep plays a role in the health of nearly every cell in our bodies. Irregular sleep schedules, not getting enough sleep, and poor-quality sleep can interfere with our physical and mental health. Good sleep helps improve your mind and mood and can help prevent health problems.

## GETTING ENOUGH QUALITY SLEEP

- Strengthens the immune system and helps fight off infections
- Supports healthy metabolism, energy levels and reduced risk of obesity
- Enhances memory and brain function
- Improves your ability to manage stress
- Restores emotional energy which can improve relationships and motivation
- Helps you drive safer - "Drowsy driving" is the cause of many deathly car accidents
- May help protect against brain disorders linked to stress and memory loss

## HOW MUCH SLEEP DO I NEED EACH NIGHT?

Most adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep a night to feel refreshed. People who are pregnant may need more and older adults may average less.

*Note: Women are more likely than men to have insomnia and other sleep problems. Changing hormones during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and menopause can affect how well a woman sleeps. But there are steps you can take to get the rest you need.*

## TRY THESE TIPS TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP:

- Try to go to sleep **when you feel sleepy** and then **get up at the same time** each morning.
- Avoid naps **after 3 p.m.**
- **Do not drink caffeinated or alcoholic drinks or smoke** late in the day or at night.
- **Exercise regularly** - try to get 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week (for example: brisk walking, weight training, biking, swimming etc.)
- Keep your bedroom **dark, quiet, and cool**. If light is a problem, try a sleeping mask. If noise is a problem, try earplugs, a fan, or a "white noise" machine to cover up the sounds.
- Do not eat or drink a lot **within about 3 hours of bedtime**.
- **Follow a routine** to help relax and wind down before sleep, such as reading a book, listening to music, or taking a bath.
- If you cannot sleep within 20 minutes of going to bed or don't feel drowsy, get out of bed. **Read or do a quiet activity until you feel sleepy**. Then try going back to bed.
- **Do not do anything in your bed that could make you more awake**. Using a mobile phone, watching TV, or eating in bed can make it harder for you to fall asleep in bed.
- **See your doctor or a sleep specialist** if you think that you have a sleep problem.

## SOURCES:

- [womenshealth.gov/mental-health/good-mental-health/sleep-and-your-health](https://www.womenshealth.gov/mental-health/good-mental-health/sleep-and-your-health)
- "Sleep Hygiene": Pathways Community HUB Institute® 2024